



Classroom Level Self Assessment Tool

September 2007

Self Assessment Tool for Teachers, Schools and Districts

The Classroom Self Assessment Tool is part of a set of three instruments intended to be used together to begin a process for planning to sustain evidence-based reading initiatives at the local level. Used as a needs assessment, the material will (1) promote reflection on current areas of strength in implementing and sustaining scientifically based reading instruction, (2) spark conversations among staff, and (3) facilitate identification of areas that are important for sustainability.

Background

Throughout the self assessment many references are made to “scientifically based research” and “research-based” reading practices. The Reading First Program is based on the findings of research, in particular the five elements of effective reading instruction identified in 2000 by the National Reading Panel—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. If the users of this self assessment feel the need for a brief refresher on the research findings on effective reading instruction, the Guidance for the Reading First Program (<http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/guidance.pdf>) document, especially the “Components of an Effective Reading Program” section found on Page 3, will help put all of the indicator statements describing effective Reading First implementation in proper context and perspective. A complete description of the elements of effective reading instruction can be found in the Reading First legislation (<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg4.html>)

Understanding and Using the Self Assessment

The quality indicator statements in the self assessment were drawn from the findings of research and literature on effective sustainability practices, where sustainability is defined as the ability of a program to operate on its core beliefs and values (its reading culture) and use them to guide essential and inevitable program adaptations over time while maintaining improved outcomes (adapted from Century and Levy, 2002).

The statements are organized around three functions that teachers perform as they develop and implement research-based reading instruction. Those functions are:

- Acquire scientifically-based reading research knowledge consistent with the school’s emerging reading culture;
- Adapt instructional delivery; and
- Use assessment data to guide decision making.

The Classroom Self Assessment, and its companion pieces, the School and District Self Assessments, may be used in a variety of ways, depending on local context. However there are two common factors that you will want to incorporate into your use of the local self assessment tool set.

First, the ratings in the instrument should be based on evidence and not perceptions alone. Each item in the instrument has suggested sources of evidence and reflection questions to guide you on this path.

Second, the use of the instruments should include a combination of individual thought and group discussion and consensus. For example, you may want to ask individuals to complete the rating form and synthesize their conclusions on what's working that will support sustainability and what needs to be developed to support sustainability on the first "Begin to Plan" Worksheet at the end of the self assessment tool. Appropriate individuals to engage in this exercise might include:

- Teachers complete the classroom self assessment;
- School level reading teams complete the school Assessment; and
- District staff with a stake in reading achievement complete the district self assessment.

Then, you may want to convene group meetings to combine conclusions from all three of the local instruments: classroom self assessment, school self assessment and district self assessment. The second Begin to Plan Worksheet is suggested as a place to capture consensus from group discussions.

Next Steps

With your needs assessment completed, you will be ready to move into developing and implementing a sustainability plan. The Sustaining Reading First website contains additional resources to assist you, including practical guidance on sustaining evidence based reading programs, how to cover recurring resource needs, and training opportunities or workshop materials.

Teachers...

A. Acquire new scientifically based reading research knowledge consistent with the school's emerging reading culture, by:

1. Applying the knowledge of research-based reading instruction that they are acquiring through training, support, and experience, and demonstrating openness to feedback on their efforts.		<table><tr><th colspan="4">Implementation Progress</th></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr></table>				Implementation Progress				4	3	2	1
Implementation Progress													
4	3	2	1										
<u>Possible Sources of Evidence</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coaching records;• teacher requests for coaching support;• lesson plans; and• interviews with teachers.		<u>Guiding Questions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What entries in coaching records indicate teachers' willingness to accept feedback and apply that feedback to instruction?• What specific requests for coaching from teachers coincide with new knowledge being learned?• What entries in lesson plans reflect implementation of new knowledge? Identify any apparent gaps in new knowledge being applied.											
2. Communicating and collaborating on a regular basis to support student learning.		<table><tr><th colspan="4">Implementation Progress</th></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr></table>				Implementation Progress				4	3	2	1
Implementation Progress													
4	3	2	1										
<u>Possible Sources of Evidence</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Records of collaboration sessions;• minutes from grade level meetings, team meetings, staff meetings; and• staff interviews.		<u>Guiding Questions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In what way do the records of collaborative sessions and/or grade level team meetings show evidence of diversity in participation and sharing of ideas? Cite specific instances in which staff refers to new knowledge they acquired from collaborating with a colleague.											
3. Using time and resources to develop conceptual understanding and competency in practice.		<table><tr><th colspan="4">Implementation Progress</th></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr></table>				Implementation Progress				4	3	2	1
Implementation Progress													
4	3	2	1										
<u>Possible Sources of Evidence</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedules and records of collaborative time and/or grade level team meetings; and• professional development activity records.		<u>Guiding Questions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do the schedules and records of collaborative time and/or grade level team meetings indicate how time was spent?• How are the resources being used to support teachers' developing knowledge?• In what ways are teachers encouraged to document their learning or reflections on how new knowledge is applied in their classroom?											

To rate your program, circle the rating that best describes your program's implementation progress for each item.

4 = Already in Place
 3 = Partially in Place, Under Development
 2 = Area to Develop
 1 = Important, But Not Feasible Now

Teachers...

B. Adapt instructional delivery, by:

4. Reflecting the characteristics of high-quality reading instruction in their teaching.

Implementation
Progress

4	3	2	1
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Possible Sources of Evidence

- Classroom observation records; and
- data gathered on classroom walkthroughs.

Guiding Questions

- Identify specific instances in which the classroom observation records show that explicit and systematic instruction is being administered. Are research-based practices evident for all five components of effective reading instruction?
- What evidence gathered during classroom walkthroughs indicates the level of high-quality instruction is consistent?
- How are the students engaged in reading activities that reflect research-based practice?
- Can students describe what they are learning and why?

5. Regularly collaborating with their peers to plan effective instruction in reading.

Implementation
Progress

4	3	2	1
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Possible Sources of Evidence

- Records of grade level team meetings.

Guiding Questions

- What entries in the records of grade level team meetings show evidence of group participation in planning?
- What best practices are being implemented consistently and within the same general time frame of one another in the grade levels?

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<p>6. Implementing the program with integrity while also differentiating instruction to meet students' instructional needs.</p>	<p>Implementation Progress</p>			
<p><u>Possible Sources of Evidence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom observations; fidelity checks; walkthroughs; and lesson plans for differentiation (strategic and intervention groups). 	<p><u>Guiding Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What evidence indicates that teachers are adhering to the recommended program content and scope and sequence of instruction? Are students with varying needs involved in different grouping formats evident during the reading block? How do the lesson plans and classroom observations reveal evidence of differentiated instruction? Can students articulate learning goals, their current strengths and weaknesses, and how they will continue to improve? 			
<p>7. Implementing instructional strategies with a high level of practice mastery.</p>	<p>Implementation Progress</p>			
<p><u>Possible Sources of Evidence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom observations; and Walkthroughs. 	<p><u>Guiding Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much time and support do teachers receive from instructional leaders to obtain mastery in the instruction strategies being learned? Are classroom observations indicating instruction that is consistent, appropriate, and implemented in the way it was intended? What evidence collected during classroom observations indicate that students are responding to instructional strategies as expected? 			
<p>8. Demonstrating through their instruction that student achievement is affected by the quality of instruction.</p>	<p>Implementation Progress</p>			
<p><u>Possible Sources of Evidence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom observations. 	<p><u>Guiding Questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are classroom observations indicating that there is high density of effective practice (i.e., using clear, consistent, and understandable language; providing extensive opportunities for practice; etc.) in teachers' instruction? What evidence collected through classroom observations indicates the curriculum aligned to scientifically-based reading research for all five reading components? Identify specific instances where the assessments administered are aligned to the instruction being taught. In what ways do student assessment results show evidence of growth in reading skills? 			

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Teachers...

C. Use assessment data to guide decision-making, by:

9. Using data to adjust their instruction with students regularly.

Implementation
Progress

4 3 2 1

Possible Sources of Evidence

- Data reports;
- records of grade level team meetings; and
- lesson plans.

Guiding Questions

- To what extent are teachers' lesson plan objectives aligned to assessment results?
- How do lesson plan objectives change as assessment results indicate new student needs?
- What indications are there that students understand the instructional activities they are engaged in? Identify specific instances where students articulate the purpose of the assessments they are given.

10. Planning and implementing differentiated instruction on a daily basis based on the data results.

Implementation
Progress

4 3 2 1

Possible Sources of Evidence

- Lesson plans for differentiated groups districts.

Guiding Questions

- In what ways do the lesson plans show evidence of matching instruction to students' needs based on data? Identify specific instances where time, group size, group members, content, methodology, and/or resources altered to meet individual students' needs.
- What evidence is there that students can explain what they are learning in their small groups?

11. Using data to drive the selection and implementation of intervention programs for persistent struggling readers.

Implementation
Progress

4 3 2 1

Possible Sources of Evidence

- Notes from grade level team meetings or building team meetings on adoption decisions; and
- school or grade level literacy plans.

Guiding Questions

- How are student needs indicated in school and grade level data reports aligned to the intervention programs being selected?
- What evidence is there that students are appropriately grouped in intervention programs that address their needs?
- Do students make progress and exit the intervention in a timely manner?
- Can students articulate why they are in an intervention program and what they need to learn?

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12. Using progress monitoring data regularly to ensure effectiveness of instruction.		Implementation Progress			
		4	2	2	1
<u>Possible Sources of Evidence</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress monitoring data; and grade level team meetings notes and lesson plans. 		<u>Guiding Questions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What entries in grade level team meetings notes and lesson plans show evidence of changes in instruction based on progress monitoring data? Identify specific instances of flexible student grouping practices evident. What evidence is there that shows students being grouped for pre-teaching, re-teaching, introduction of new skills, and practice purposes? Can students articulate why they are being assessed? 			
13. Using the data results to recognize and celebrate student successes in reading on an on-going basis.		Implementation Progress			
		4	3	2	1
<u>Possible Sources of Evidence</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data reports and recognition records. 		<u>Guiding Questions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many teachers have visual indicators reflecting students' success in reading? How many teachers communicate positive feedback to their students as successes arise? Do students regularly identify when they have been successful and explain specifically what they did well? In what ways does the school communicate student success to their parents? How does the school make parents aware of reading instructional goals so they understand what successful steps along the way look like? 			
14. Establishing shared goals and high expectations for all of their students in reading.		Implementation Progress			
		4	3	2	1
<u>Possible Sources of Evidence</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records of goals set (e.g. literacy plans for grade or school); and expectations documented through teacher follow-up in class (intensity of instruction-following schedules, implementing plans, etc.). 		<u>Guiding Questions</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What evidence exists that students can articulate their reading goals? To what extent is teachers' instruction at a high level of intensity for all students? What evidence indicates that all students have access to grade level content? 			

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Begin to Plan at the Classroom Level: Synthesize Your Own Thoughts		
Leadership Function	What's in Place and Working?	Areas to Develop
A. Acquire new scientifically based reading research knowledge consistent with the school's emerging reading culture.		
B. Adapt instructional delivery.		
C. Use assessment data to guide decision-making.		
Begin to Plan at the Classroom Level: Meet with Others and Reach Consensus		

Based on group discussion, identify the top priority Areas to Develop.

Based on group discussion, what general strategies are needed to address the listed priorities?

Based on group discussion, what general challenges do you anticipate?



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